

**King County Mobility Coalition
Technology Subcommittee**

MINUTES

Tuesday, March 23, 2010, 9:00 to 10:30 a.m.
Metro Accessible Services, 821 Second Ave, Seattle

In attendance: Melony Joyce, Ref Lindmark, Michelle Zeidman.

Handouts: (1) KCMC subcommittee descriptions, (2) 2010 draft work plan, and (3) KCMC goals and strategies.

General Discussion:

The subcommittee reviewed its scope of work and draft work plan items, and discussed the following overarching issues:

- The subcommittee discussed its potential role and agreed that it could serve as a resource to agencies who want to increase their use of technology, such as by sharing best practices (rather than by providing high-level technological support or funding).
- The subcommittee agreed to frame its work around the concept of “connectivity” as listed in the Washington State Joint Transportation Committee’s report on Special Needs Transportation Coordination (see recommendation 6c on page ES-8, http://www.leg.wa.gov/JTC/Documents/ACCT/SpecialNeedsTranspFINALREPORT_010609.pdf). This work will focus on connecting people/transportation users with each other and with transportation providers through the use of technology.
- The subcommittee also discussed the importance of using technology to encourage two-way communication between KCMC and special needs transportation users. This could be something the subcommittee tries to tackle.
- Action Item: talk with KCMC Co-chairs about welcoming special needs transportation users on our subcommittees.
- Ref noted that Metro is making its data available to the public so that private web developers can develop new technology tools/applications that enable the public to easily access the data.
- Ref shared that TriMet in Portland lists 30+ web and smart phone tools developed by private web developers on its website for users: <http://trimet.org/apps/index.htm>.
- In the future, the subcommittee could meet with transit people at the UW, such as TRAC, regarding how KCMC can partner with them to develop additional technology tools for people with special transportation needs.
- Action Item: research the use of blogs and other social media technology by people with disabilities and other special needs populations to inform our use of these technologies in the provision of special needs transportation.

Potential Projects:

The subcommittee discussed the following potential projects for the Coalition:

Project 1. Inventory and Best Practices for Technology in Special Needs Transportation

- Step 1: Survey KCMC members to see how their transportation programs use technology (especially in innovative ways) and create an inventory of existing technology tools, such as robo-call systems to alert passengers to route changes, online message boards, One Bus Away application, etc.
- Step 2: Talk to users to learn about their experience using these transportation-related technology tools.
- Step 3: Share local (and national) best practices for transportation technology tools with the Coalition.

Project 2. Rideshareonline.com Demonstration Project for Social Networks

- The subcommittee discussed how the new RideShareOnline.com can be used as a dynamic ridematching tool for existing groups of people, such as church groups or other social networks. This would allow people to share rides with others they already have a connection with and could expand the use of ridesharing beyond work trips.
- The subcommittee expressed interest in finding an agency or other social group for a demonstration project with RideShareOnline.com.

Project 3. Specialized Technology Tools for Segmented Target Audiences

- The subcommittee discussed a way to provide shortcuts to existing technology tools, such as One Bus Away, WalkScore and Google's walking paths application, so that users don't have to sift through all the results themselves.
- This project would focus on creating webpages with technology tools targeted to specific audiences, such as a transportation tools targeted to youth which might include One Bus Away, etc. These specialized lists of tools (and/or webpages) could be shared with school districts (for targeting youth) and senior centers (for targeting seniors) to help spread the word.
- The subcommittee agreed to start with a focus on tools for youth. Over time, this project may expand to include specialized tool kits for seniors, people with disabilities and people with limited English proficiency. These tool kits could also be customized based on subregions; for example, a specialized list of the top five tools for clients of Circle of Friends could be developed and shared through that agency.

Project 4. Multi-lingual Transportation Websites

- The subcommittee discussed a project to translate transportation providers' websites into multiple languages, such as Metro's website. Google's translator tool was suggested as a way to do this, with a few translated pages tested for accuracy.

Project 5. Technology Ambassadors

- The subcommittee discussed the barriers to technology use by special needs populations, including (1) financial cost of entry and (2) time needed to find and connect to new tools.
- The subcommittee discussed creating a "technology ambassador" program (or component of the existing travel ambassador program), which would help people load transportation applications on their smart phones, try out new web-based transportation tools, and become comfortable with technology tools for transportation. This could be achieved by having technology ambassadors visit senior centers and other agency locations (similar to

travel ambassador or Getting Around Puget Sound trainings) to answer questions and provide tech assistance to clients.

Funding Sources:

The subcommittee discussed possible funding sources for these technology projects:

- Ref noted that the City of Seattle has a Technology Fund and might be interested in funding some transportation-related technology projects, such as those outlined above.
- Melony also suggested that technology tools could be incorporated into re-funding proposals for existing grants from WSDOT and PSRC.
 - Action Item: the subcommittee will encourage Coalition members to think about this as they develop their proposals for the upcoming grant cycle.

Resources:

- Utilizing Information Technology in Innovative Marketing Approaches for Public Transportation, report for the Florida Department of Transportation, February 2010, http://www.dot.state.fl.us/research-center/Completed_Proj/Summary_PTO/FDOT_BD549-53_rpt.pdf

Next Steps:

- The subcommittee agreed to meet monthly for the next several months and to recruit additional members at the next KCMC meeting in May.
- Action Item: Ref will talk with Cathy Blumenthal about doing a presentation for KCMC about the new RideShareOnline.com tool at an upcoming meeting.
- Action Item: Melony will talk with Park Woodworth about the RideShareOnline.com demonstration project idea.
- Action Item: At the April Steering Committee meeting, we will discuss the possibility of including a presentation about RideShareOnline.com at the May KCMC meeting.